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#FOAMems - the impact to date

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Background

- Social media use amongst healthcare professionals is on the rise¹, and it is increasingly being used by paramedics as a platform for continuing education and international collaboration.^{2,3}
- In February 2014 the hashtag “#FOAMems” was registered.
- It is used by paramedics and other clinicians who are involved in sharing knowledge related to emergency medical services (EMS), paramedicine and prehospital care.
- It is an extension of the FOAM (free open access medical education) movement.



Objective

- The purpose of this study was to characterise and evaluate the content of #FOAMems tweets in the first two years of operation.



Methods

- An analytical report and transcript for #FOAMems was generated on symplur.com, with a search date from 4th February 2014 to 4th February 2016, a total period of 24 months.
- Analysis of all tweets for a random one month period (1st-31st October 2015) containing the hashtag was also generated on both symplur.com and Followthehashtag.
- All tweets were reviewed and categorised by two reviewers. Data from all methods was combined to obtain the results presented.



Results

- During the study period, there were over 42,000 tweets containing #FOAMems, generated by over 6,000 participants.
- These tweets resulted in over 60 million impressions or potential views by others.
- The top 92 tweeters of #FOAMems during this period were analysed for professional qualification or professional identity. Of these 92 individuals, 52% were paramedics (n=48).
- Tweets were also categorised based on content, source (original tweet or retweet) and whether they linked to referenced material or not.

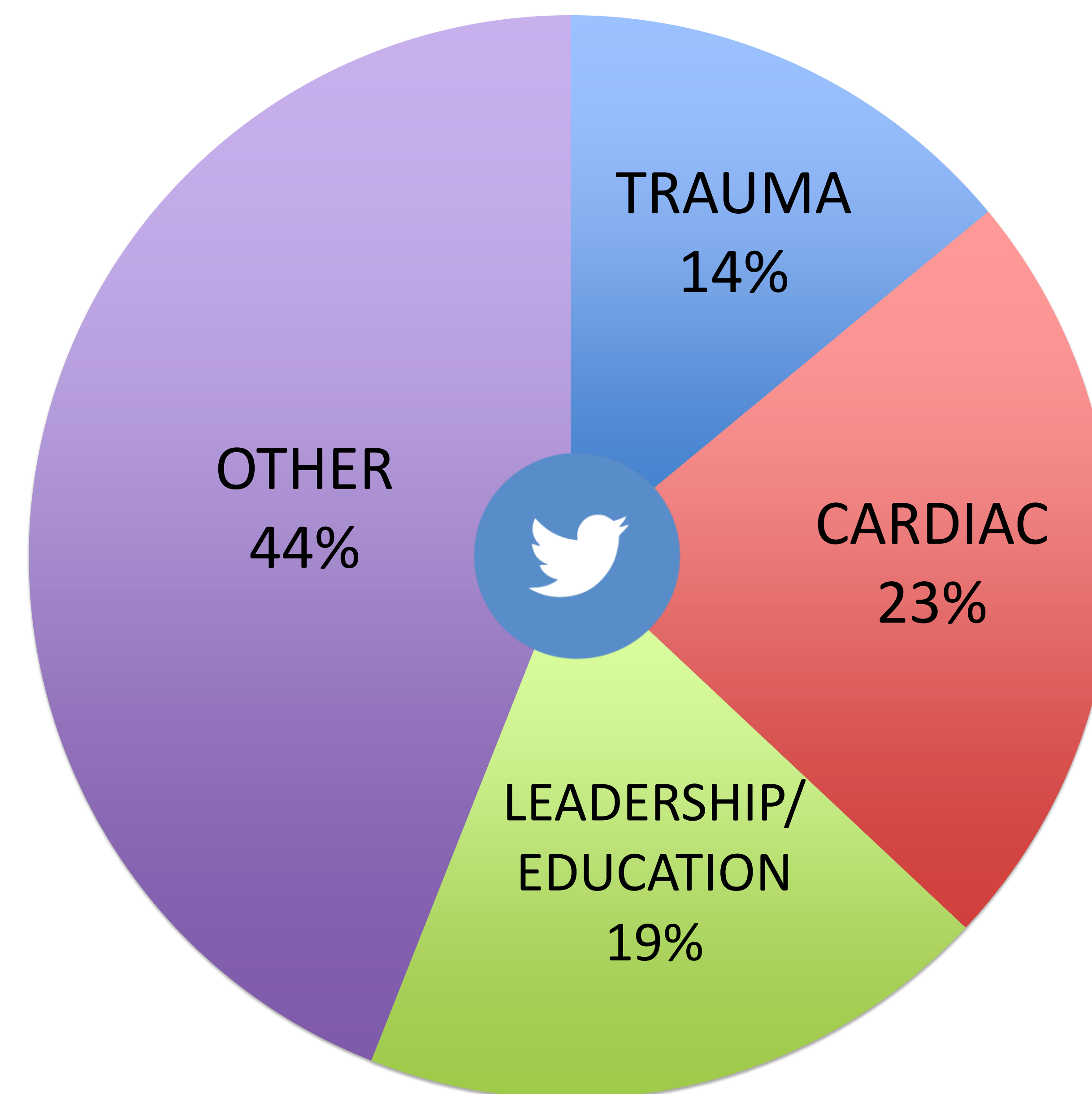
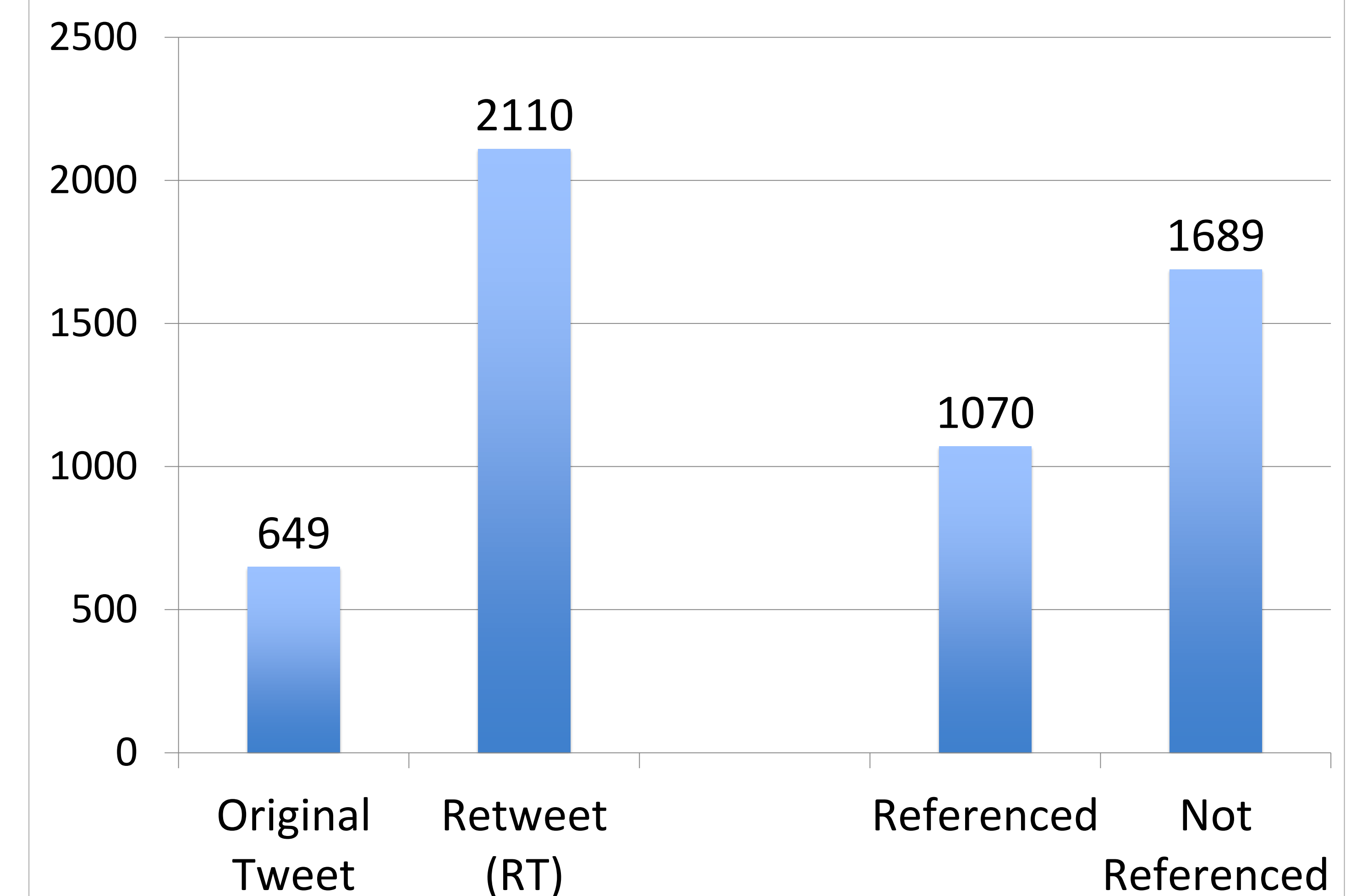


Figure 1: Categories of tweets based on content (Total=2759)

Figure 2: Source (original vs. retweet) & reference (referenced vs. not referenced)



Conclusion

- Paramedics are engaging with both clinical and non-clinical content on Twitter using #FOAMems, with the majority of tweets relating to clinical issues.
- Social media resources are widely tweeted and re-tweeted, which is in line with the FOAM movement's philosophy.
- Opportunities exist for paramedics to share further clinical, educational and technical knowledge supported by referenced material.



References

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2. Batt AM, Cummins NM. (2016). E-learning on the Road – Irish Pre-Hospital Practitioners' Experiences of Online Technology and Social Media for Continuous Professional Competency. *National Institute of Health Sciences Research Bulletin*, March 2016.
3. Escajeda J, Martin-Gill C (2016) Prehospital providers' utilization of online medical education resources and social media. Poster presentation at NAEMSP.

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1. Cadogan M, Thoma B, Chan TM, Lin M. Free open access meducation (FOAM): The rise of emergency medicine and critical care blogs and podcasts (2002-2013). Emergency Medicine Journal 31(1)
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